

Letter CLXXXIII, "The principal of these things is the mastery of one's temper, and that coolness of mind, and serenity of countenance which hinders us from discovering, by words, actions, or even looks, those passions or sentiments by which we are inwardly moved or agitated, and the discovery of which gives cooler and abler people such infinite advantages over us, not only in great business, but in all the most common occurrences of life."¹ Letter CXXVIII, "Endeavor, as much as you can, to keep company with people, above you: there you rise, as much as you sink with people below you; for you are whatever the company you keep is."² Letter CXXXI, "Never think any portion of time whatsoever too short to be employed; something or other may always be done in it."³

A continued perusal of the early authors emphasizes the fact that Chesterfield had been so greatly affected by the contents of these "handbooks" that he made their teachings quite unconsciously his own despite his living in a time sharply contrasted to the sixteenth century. As has been previously stated, Chesterfield was the epitome of the gentlemen in his time. Undoubtedly his reading in his early formative years gave him his conception and his ideals. His observation of society and his desire to excel, however, aided in the realization of these ideals. To proceed with the comparison between his Letters and the conduct books in point of character building may prove profitable.

1. Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, p 231, Letter CLXXXIII.

2. op. cit., p 127, Letter CXXVIII.

3. op. cit., p 132, Letter CXXXI.